

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the final Office Action dated August 4, 2006 and the Advisory Action dated October 13, 2006, issued in connection with the above-identified application. A request for continued examination accompanies this Response. Claims 1-18 and 35 are all the claims presently pending in the application. With this Response, claims 1, 14-16 and 35 have been amended, and no new matter has been introduced. Thus, favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

I. Response To § 103 Rejections

Claims 1-18 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark (U.S. Patent No. 6,351,738, hereafter “Clark”) in view of Ginter et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,658,568, hereafter “Ginter”). The Applicants respectfully traverse the above rejections for the following reasons.

To expedite prosecution, the Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 14-16 and 35 to further distinguish over the cited references. As amended, the claims are directed to an information processing device, system and method that, in pertinent part, include “a conversion step or means,” substituting step or means” and searching step or means” for performing transactions with the corporations without the need to disclose personal information.

Using the present invention, each user in the system is registered to a predetermined community or group. When a user in a community requests information or merchandise from a corporation, the user transmits a request to the information processing apparatus. The request includes personal information of the user, such as a user ID and e-mail address. The conversion means converts the user ID into a serial number corresponding to the community to which the user belongs (i.e., generic community ID). Additionally, the user’s e-mail address is also converted to a community e-mail address (i.e., generic community e-mail address). This generic community information is substituted for the personal information prior to a user’s request being forwarded to the corporation server.

The information processing apparatus also stores the personal information and the generic community information for that user in a corresponding manner. In other words, the information processing apparatus can locate the personal information of a user by using the corresponding generic community information. Thus, when a corporation sends a reply (to a

user's request) to the information processing apparatus, the reply includes a reference to the generic community information for that user. The searching means of the information processing apparatus locates the personal information of the user corresponding to the generic community information, and forwards the reply to the user (see, Applicants' Application, Fig. 7 and page 36, line 3-page 37, line 17). Neither Clark nor Ginter teach or suggest these features of the present invention.

Clark describes a collective business system that includes participants engaged in common fields of business endeavor. As correctly noted by the Examiner, Clark fails to teach or suggest the "substitute step or means" of the present invention (see, Office Action, pages 5-6). The Examiner relies on Ginter for overcoming the deficiencies in Clark, but Ginter still falls short of the present invention.

Ginter describes a trusted infrastructure support system that provides secure, automated transaction processing for use in electronic commerce. However, Ginter merely describes protecting a consumer's identity by not revealing personal information to a usage clearinghouse. Specifically, the usage clearinghouse 300 provides a summary report 304b to advertisers 306 that does not reveal the consumer's identity (see, Ginter, Figs. 17A-17F, col. 28, lines 40-49). Thus, an advertiser cannot target particular users without first getting the consent of a user to reveal their identity.

Additionally, Ginter describes the use of a "rights template" (see, Ginter, col. 76, lines 45-65). The rights template allows a rights holder to define the rights associated with accessing a particular digital property. A rights template is illustrated more clearly in Fig. 45A. As illustrated in Fig. 45A, the template includes a list of defined rights for accessing a digital property such as "unconditional permission," "permission conditional on payment," "permission based on content," and the like. However, there is no mention of a conversion and substitution of personal information, let alone the searching of personal information using substituted information as part of a transaction between a user and the rights holder.

Accordingly, even if it were appropriate to combine the teachings of Clark and Ginter, the combination still does not teach or suggest all the features recited in independent claims 1, and 14-16 and 35 (as amended). In particular, the combination fails to teach or suggest the claimed "conversion step or means," "substituting step or means," and "searching step or means"

of the present invention. For these reasons, independent claims 1, 14-16 and 35 are distinguished over the cited references. Likewise, dependent claim 2-13 and 17-18 are distinguished over the cited references based on their dependency from independent claims 1 and 16.

II. Conclusion

In light of the above, the Applicants respectfully submit that all the claims in the present application are patentable over the prior art of record. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If additionally fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Director is authorized to deduct such fees from deposit account no. 02-1818.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY 

Thomas C. Basso
Reg. No. 46,541
Cust. No. 29175

Dated: November 6, 2006